

COMPATIBILITY DETERMINATION

Use: Light Goose Hunting - Conservation Season

Refuge Name: Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge

Establishing and Acquisition Authority: Executive Order No. 7156, August 23, 1935.

Refuge Purpose(s): "...as a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife." 16 USC 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)

"...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds." 16 USC 715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act)

"...suitable for-(1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources, (3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species..." 16 USC 460k-1 "...the Secretary...may accept and use...real...property. Such acceptance may be accomplished under the terms and conditions of restrictive covenants imposed by donors..." 16 USC 460k-2 (Refuge Recreation Act (16 USC 460k-460-k), as amended).

National Wildlife Refuge System Mission: "The Mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

Description of Use:

What is it? Guided light goose hunting during the Conservation Season

Where is the use conducted? In the agricultural fields located in the southeast corner of Section 1 and the northeast corner of Section 12 in Township 61 North, Range 39 West.

When is the use conducted? Guided light goose hunting is permitted within the Conservation Season framework.

How is the use conducted? A guide will be contracted via cash bid by the refuge. The guide will be responsible for selecting the hunters, determining their legal eligibility and conduct while on the refuge. A refuge staff person will serve as the light goose hunt coordinator to monitor the activities and functions of the guide to ensure they comply with all permits and restrictions.

Availability of Resources: Based on a review of Refuge budget allocated for this activity, there is adequate funding to ensure compatibility and to administer and manage this hunt at the proposed level. Station funding costs are estimated to be approximately \$3,000 for road gravel and \$2,000 to administer the hunt the initial year and \$2,000 per year thereafter.

Anticipated Impacts of the Use: Up to 30,000 visitors come to Squaw Creek during the spring migration to see the light geese and other migratory birds particularly during the week ends. Potential conflicts between visitors and light goose hunters will be minimized by controlling the timing and location of the goose hunting areas. Hunting will not be permitted within ¼ mile of the auto tour route. Hunting will end at noon each daily. In addition, hunting will not be permitted within ¼ mile of any

trees used as potential loafing sites for bald eagles or other raptors.

Public Review and Comment: The public has been informed of this proposed project through the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment.

Determination:

 Use is Not Compatible

 XX Use is Compatible With Following Stipulations

Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility: Guides must prove they are experienced and professional. Only fields within designated locations will be hunted. Entrance to the hunting area will be from Highway 118. Hunting will be allowed during the entire spring conservation order season. Hunting will not be permitted until arriving light geese have developed a daily pattern of using the Refuge. If hunting disturbs the geese to the point that they do not use the closed portion of the refuge that is traditionally used by light geese as a staging area during the spring migration, then the hunt timing will be evaluated and may be restricted to periods that are dependant on the number of geese actively using the refuge. Hunting will end at noon each day.

Justification: Providing public hunting opportunities is a priority use of national wildlife refuges. This hunt provides an opportunity to educate the non-hunting public for the need to control the over-abundant light goose population.

Signature: Refuge Manager: (Signature and Date)

Concurrence: Regional Chief: (Signature and Date)

Mandatory 10- or 15-year Re-evaluation Date: